

The Scimitar

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U.S. Navy photo by JO3 Shawnee McKain
Builder 3rd Class (SCW) Jeremy Hunt, an NMCB 4 Seabee, drills a hole in the pavement to stabilize the lights around the helo pad. NMCB 4 was in Jordan completing a helo pad for the Prince Ali Bin Al Hussein Hospital.

Seabees pave way in Karak

By JO3 Shawnee McKain
Force Journalist

"Can do Four!" is the rallying cry of the Seabees of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Four. It's gotten them through many tough challenges over the years and most recently helped them as they turned the side of a hill into a helicopter pad in just 40 days.

The Seabees, well known for coming to the assistance of U.S. coalition partners, came here to build a helo pad for Prince Ali Bin Al Hussein Hospital to improve its emergency medical services. According to Col. Malik Husein, a Jordanian Army officer, this hospital, like many in Jordan, has a lack of medical services.

"This area is in need of a helicopter pad because it is in the middle of the country and too far away to drive to Amman," Husein said. "Now the people of Karak will be able to fly to Amman quickly if they need medical care."

The United States Embassy in Jordan

works closely with Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/Commander, 5th Fleet and the Jordanian Army on community relations projects. Two years ago, the Royal Jordanian Health Ministry elected to build a helo pad at a hospital in Al Aqabah. The helo pad in Karak was built as a humanitarian aid mission and to provide extra training for the Seabees. It is the second of 12 helo pads planned by the Embassy.

"Right now they're only building helo pads in Jordan, but our design can be built anywhere else," said Lt. Eric Haun, a civil engineer for COMUSNAVCENT/COMFIFTHFLT. "These became a priority, so we wanted to get them finished."

The Seabees began construction in July and have worked nonstop since then to finish the project quickly while maintaining standards.

NMCB 4 came into the project expecting to pour the concrete for a helo pad, lay sur-

See Seabees - page 2

MCMDIV 31 ships receive praise, awards

Bronze Stars, Combat Action Ribbons awarded for going in harm's way

By JO1(SW) Dennis Herring
Editor

Commanding officers of the four mine-hunting vessels stationed in the 5th Fleet area of responsibility were presented the Bronze Star Medal at an awards ceremony here recently.

Vice Adm. Timothy J. Keating, Commander U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/Commander 5th Fleet presented the medals recognizing the effort of the crews during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Crews from *USS Ardent* (MCM 12), *USS Dextrous* (MCM 13), *USS Cardinal* (MHC 60) and *USS Raven* (MHC 61) were present to receive awards ranging from the Bronze

Star to Letters of Commendation signed by Keating.

"The crews did a fantastic job in a riverine environment, a mission they aren't normally trained for," said Cmdr. Ian Hall, Commander, Mine Countermeasures Division 31. "These ships are designed for open-ocean, mine countermeasures. Going into Iraq's Khawr Abd Allah waterway was very challenging, but the crews did a magnificent job.

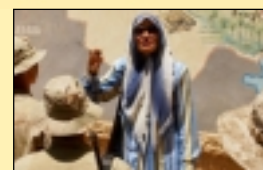
"We presented many awards for their work during OIF, but most of all we recognized the commanding officers for exceptional leadership while taking their crews into harm's way. More important, they brought their crews home safely," Hall added.

"We were engaged in a mission we were

not trained for," said Lt. Tracey Green, *Dextrous*' executive officer. "We had to train ourselves for the job by joining with British ships and creating a practice area before OIF to prepare.

See MCMDIV 31 - page 3

See Inside



Seabees bring history - page 3



Seabees from front page

rounding asphalt, add the finishing touches and leave. But as Seabees know, it's rarely that simple. Several challenges arose during the construction phase of the project.

"We had to come in and demolish the two existing buildings on the site and grade everything to elevation so we could pour the concrete," job supervisor Builder 2nd Class Jose Carrillo said. "Their concrete is a lot different than ours and it was tricky. We had to work with it to get it right. But it turned out very well."

In addition to laying down the concrete, the Seabees had to install electrical wiring for the helo pad's lighting.

"They had different wire coating than we're used to and it was really stiff and hard to work with," Carrillo said. "We also had to use transformers to make sure the lights would operate safely."

The Seabees couldn't bring their heavy equipment or supplies due to weight restrictions, so they had to rely on the Jordanians to get them what they needed.

"The city we're in doesn't have a lot of

the supplies that we need, so the contractor had to go out of his way to get our stuff from another city about an hour away," Equipment Operator 2nd Class Ethan Townsend said. "That took up a lot of time we didn't really have."

To overcome these challenges, the Seabees utilized the few Jordanians who spoke English to help get the supplies they needed.

"We didn't understand them and they didn't understand us, so we had to use a lot of hand signals and sometimes it got pretty crazy," Townsend said. "We also couldn't go out in town by ourselves so we had to try to explain to them what we needed. It was rough at times, but we came through and finished the job."

Even though they had a few obstacles, it was all in a day's work for the Seabees. NMCB4

will return to Port Hueneme, Calif. in the near future and other deploying Seabee battalions will finish the rest of the planned helo pads.

"We're really ecstatic about the project and the work the Seabees have done here," Haun said. "They turned the side of a hill into a flat, useful surface. We're really pleased."

"I'm really very thankful to the team and



U.S. Navy photo by JO3 Shawnee McKain
Construction Electrician 3rd Class Jared Parr of NMCB 4 with a Jordanian soldier explains how to use the correct drill bit to complete his part in construction of the helo pad.

we really enjoyed working with them," Husein said. "I'm really proud to work more with the Navy. We learned a lot from each other, and the people of Karak appreciate it very much."

"It's a poor country and we're just doing what we can to help them out," Townsend said. "They're beautiful people and overall we had a good time out here."



Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and Commander, U.S. 5th Fleet, is **Vice Adm. Timothy J. Keating.**

The Scimitar is an authorized publication for the men, women and families serving overseas in the U.S. Naval Forces Central Command area. The editorial content of The Scimitar is prepared, edited and provided by Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/Commander, U.S. Fifth Fleet Public Affairs Office. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the official views of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the U.S. Navy and do not imply endorsement thereof.

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**A TIME OF
REMEMBRANCE AND
RESOLVE**

**SERVICE OF
COMMEMORATION AT
NSA CHAPEL
THURSDAY, 11:30
SEPTEMBER 11**





Seabees Bring Ancient History To Life

By Lt. j.g. Josh Frey

COMUSNAVCENT/COMFIFTHFLT

Public Affairs

AL HILLAH, Iraq (NNS) — When Navy Seabees attached to the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) advanced into the ancient biblical city of Babylon at the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), they arrived to find the city's museum and looted and damaged.

After Marines secured the city to protect it from further destruction, the Seabees built Camp Babylon around the ancient city in order to protect one of history's most important archaeological treasures. The individual talent of one Seabee led to the repair of one of the museum's most prized re-creations of ancient history; a scale model of the tower of Babel. The tower, according to biblical history, was built by Noah's descendants who intended it to reach up to heaven. God foiled them by confusing their language so they could no longer understand each other.

When Seabees first went into the museum to check on air conditioning units, they saw the condition of the ancient treasures and knew something had to be done. Light fixtures had been ripped out and glass cases were smashed. Anything that could be carried out had been stolen, and a large model of the tower of Babel was smashed to pieces. Amid the repair efforts of the museum came an unlikely contribution that would reinforce that there is no limit to what Seabees can do.

Builder 2nd Class Roger Hatcher is an avid model builder in his hometown, Moorpark,

Calif. He is known for his complex working model ships that fire cannons by remote control. Naturally, his skill made him the right man for the job of rebuilding the tower of Babel model.

"When we got to Iraq, I thought I'd be working on hospitals and schools. To be able to work on a historic site that people could look at and say, 'that's what it was like,' was pretty rewarding," said Hatcher.

One of the first things Hatcher did was take a tour of the city led by the two resident archaeologists. The tour has become somewhat legendary among the Seabees and Marines there. "Everything I knew about Babylon was from the bible. Once you take that tour, it changes everything. It just sucks you in," added Hatcher.

When Hatcher first saw the museum, he found glass all over the floor from museum display cases, and paperwork explaining what each artifact was that had been maliciously set on fire, leading him to believe that maybe these were not just looters but former regime loyalists.

Hatcher developed a close relationship with the archaeologists, working with them

to reconstruct the model as accurately as possible. He studied old photos of the original model and artists' sketches of what the Tower of Babel was believed to have looked like.

"The archaeologists knew everything



U.S. Navy photo by PH1 Arlo K. Abrahamson

An Iraqi woman speaks about her country's ancient history to Sailors and Marines outside of a museum.

about Babylon. They told me they had discovered ancient Babylonian tablets thousands of years old that were now gone. They took it very hard. They love that we are here, and that Babylon is now protected in the middle of our camp," said Hatcher.

Upon nearing completion of the model, Hatcher and Seabees from the Marine Engineer Group returned home. A Reservist, he intends to complete the unfinished portions of the model at home and ship them to the museum.

MCMDIV 31 from front page



U.S. Navy photo by PH1 Brien Aho

USS Dextrous (MCM 13) takes part in mine counter measure operations in the Arabian Gulf along with coalition forces.

"The waterways had not been surveyed since 1992, so there were no accurate charts. There were also a lot of damaged and sunken

vessels in the waterway."

One Navy Marine Corps Achievement Medal was presented to Chief Petty Officer (select) Mineman Jerry L. Gerhardt from *Dextrous*. While *Dextrous*' crew transited the KAA waterway hunting for mines, Gerhardt spotted a small boat along the river's bank.

"The boat appeared to be rigged for a suicide attack," said Gerhardt. He was standing watch at the topside 50-caliber machine gun just after sunrise when the ship passed the small boat the first time.

"We couldn't clearly identify the target as we passed by in the morning, but when we returned later, I could easily tell it was a small boat," said Gerhardt. "I called the officer of the deck and reported what I saw. We pulled in closer and there were ammo cans all over the area. Explosive ordnance technicians investigated and informed us

of the explosives."

During OIF, 10 coalition mine countermeasures ships transited the Khawr Abd Allah waterway clearing over 900 miles of water space. More than 230 mine-like objects were investigated and 90 mines were recovered. Eleven of those were destroyed. Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit Six (Detachments 2, 6, and 8) and U.S. Naval Special Clearance Team One (with an Unmanned Underwater Vehicle detachment) helped to classify and destroy these mines.

"These Sailors deserve praise for their dedication," Hall said. "The quick effort of these crews created a swept channel in the KAA, allowing the British ship, *RFA Sir Galahad* (L 3005) access to transport humanitarian aid into Iraq in late March."

The Secretary of the Navy has authorized awarding the Combat Action Ribbon to each of the crews of the four ships.



Seabees work with Iraqis to provide proper burial for mass grave victims

By Lt. j.g. Josh Frey

COMUSNAVCENT/COMFIFTHFLT

Public Affairs

As 1st Marine Expeditionary Force's (I MEF) Engineer Group (MEG) Seabees advanced with Marines into southern Iraq and secured the Shiite area of Hillah, it became apparent that Saddam Hussein had fallen from power. Emboldened by the taste of freedom, local Iraqis went to a location they knew was a mass grave for thousands of Iraqis systematically executed by Saddam Hussein. Their intent was to recover remains of their loved ones who had disappeared during the violence in a Shiite uprising after the end of Operation Desert Storm.

"My first thoughts were that this was evidence of mass destruction, very similar to the feeling you get when you go to Dachau or Bergen-Belsen," said Capt. Albert Garcia, the deputy commander of the I MEF/MEG. "At that point we fully realized the importance of our mission."

"Twelve years later they had not forgotten this," said Lt. Jeff Gerken, Officer in Charge of the Air Detachment, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 15, "They were still scared of Saddam. The people who first went there were very brave."

The governor of southern Iraq appointed an Iraqi neurologist to lead the effort to recover the victims' bodies. In May, he went to I MEF for help and they didn't hesitate. The Marines initially provided security for the site, as well as shade and water to the families digging for their loved ones. Some 3,860 sets of remains were recovered, of which 3,000 were identified. 860 sets of remains were unclaimed. When the Iraqis were finished, the doctor came and asked for help reburying the victims. The Marines called the Seabees.

"The locals were crying and wailing. One woman passed out. It was awful," said Gerken. "I drew a parallel to World War II G.I.s when they came across the concentration camps. First you think, 'How could this happen?' then you think, 'What can I do to help these people?'"

"What the locals wanted was to recover their loved ones and bury their remains," said Garcia. "It was the right thing to do."

"At first they asked us to cover the holes left by the initial digging, so we brought in backhoes. That process alone uncovered more bodies," said Garcia. "We found baby shoes, skulls that had been cut with chainsaws, many had been buried alive. Entire families were executed. We heard from the locals that after a point, it was just people being rounded up and executed at a rate of 900 a day."

The Seabees dug burial plots under exact specifications according to Islamic tradition. The Iraqis buried their dead and held a private Muslim ceremony. Plastic bags were placed on top of the graves of 860 unclaimed bodies with items that could help identify them. The work at the Al Hillah burial site was completed last May.

"They asked for help and we provided an engineering solution," said Gerken. "It is now a respectful place for burial."



Command Religious Program Naval Support Activity Bahrain

Weekly Schedule of Events

Monday	1200 - Catholic Mass, Chaplain's Office Chapel Annex 1700 - Gospel Choir Practice, Chapel/Training Facility
Tuesday	1200 - Catholic Mass, Chaplain's Office Chapel Annex 1830 - Gospel Bible Study, Chaplain Parker's flat
Wednesday	1200 - Catholic Mass, Chapel/Training Facility 1630 - Catholic Choir Practice, Chapel/Training Facility 1730 - Protestant Choir Practice, Chapel/Training Facility 1830 - Gospel Choir Practice, Chapel/Training Facility 1830-2000 - Alien Youth Group Bible Study (grades 9-12), Bahrain School Room NTC 2000 - Gospel Praise Dancer's rehearsal, POC Elder Sorrells
Thursday	1200 - Catholic Mass, Chaplain's Office Chapel Annex 1630-1700 - Confessions, Chapel/Training Facility 1730 - Catholic Vigil Mass, Chapel/Training Facility 1830 - Gospel Intercessory Prayer Ministry, POC Miller
Friday	0930 - Catholic Mass, Chapel/Training Facility 0930 - Protestant Adult Friday School II in the CPO Lounge at the Dome 1100 - Protestant Worship Service, Chapel/Training Facility 1130 - Gospel Friday School Class, Navy College Classroom #2 1300 - Gospel Service, Chapel/Training Facility 1330 - Gospel Children's Church ages 5-10 in the CDC, POC Mrs. Fulson 1800 - Protestant Evening Worship/Fellowship/Potluck at Chaplain Parker's flat
Saturday	0730 - Protestant Single and Geo-Bachelor Men's Study in the Dome Conference room
Sunday	1200 - Catholic Mass, Chaplain's Office Chapel Annex 1800 - Protestant Evening Worship Service, Chapel/Training Facility 1900 - Gospel Praise Dancer's rehearsal, POC Elder Sorrells



Laypeople:

Muslim- CTICM Young
Latter Day Saints- Cmdr. Hansen
Jewish- Lt. j.g. Frey
United Pentacostal- CW3 Moody

NSA Chaplain Staff:

Capt. Parker, Command Chaplain
Lt. Borger, Catholic Chaplain
RP1(SW) Jefferson-Brooks
RP2 Harris

RPSN McCalister

NAVCENT Chaplain Staff:

Capt. Tidd, Command Chaplain
Cdr. Parisi, Catholic Chaplain
RP2 Mosqueda

Questions regarding Command Religious Programs, please contact NSA Bahrain Chaplain's office at 439-4235/4303 or 724-235/303, Sunday - Thursday.

Event participation contingent upon Force Protection Conditions



Deployed troops get break on school loans

By K.L. Vantran,

American Forces Press Service

Military personnel who have been deployed or mobilized are not required to make student loan payments during their absences.

Federal regulations require lenders to postpone the student loan program payments of active-duty military personnel. This applies to members of the National Guard and Ready Reserves who have been called to active duty, as well as to active-duty personnel whose duty station has been changed as a result of a military mobilization.

"Many brave men and women serving our nation right now have put their personal lives

on hold to answer the nation's call to duty," said U.S. Education Secretary Rod Paige in a news release earlier this year. "As they defend the freedoms we cherish, our Soldiers should not have to worry about their student loan obligations and resuming their studies."

He encouraged higher education and lending communities to be flexible and provide assistance to service members, so they can "easily resume their studies and financial obligations after they complete their tours of duty."

The regulations apply to student loans made under the Federal Family Education Loan, William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan and Federal Perkins Loan programs.

The law also requires that active-duty mili-

tary people who have not begun the repayment period on their loans continue to receive a grace period (generally six months) before repaying their loans. Students who were in school at the time of mobilization must also be given a reasonable period to resume school before lenders request payments.

Colleges will not be required to collect financial aid funds that now-active duty students were given to pay for books and living expenses. Additionally, Education Department officials encourage colleges and universities to either fully refund tuition and other institutional charges, or give credit against future charges to students forced to withdraw from school to fulfill their military obligations.



NSA Paradise Theater

THURSDAY

- 11** 1730 Daddy Day Care (PG)
1930 Die Another Day (PG-13)

FRIDAY

- 12** 1530 The Santa Clause 2 (G)
1730 Malibu's Most Wanted (PG-13)
1930 Antwone Fisher (PG-13)

SATURDAY

- 13** 1530 Treasure Planet (PG)
1730 A Man Apart (R)
1930 Bulletproof Monk (PG-13)

SUNDAY

- 14** 1730 It Runs in the Family (PG-13)
1930 View from the Top (PG-13)

MONDAY

- 15** 1730 A Man Apart (R)
1930 Reversal (PG-13)

TUESDAY

- 16** 1730 Rent Control (R)
1930 Daddy Day Care (PG)

WEDNESDAY

- 17** 1530 Extreme Ops (PG-13)
1730 Confidence (R)
1930 Die Another Day (PG-13)

EXTREME OPS (PG-13) Rufus Sewell & Bridgette Wilson: Three extreme sports enthusiasts travel to the Austrian Alps near the Yugoslav border to film a TV commercial of them attempting to outrun an avalanche. What they don't know is they are filming near the hideout of a Serbian war criminal. When they accidentally get him on film, all hell breaks loose. (93min)

DIE ANOTHER DAY (PG-13) Pierce Brosnan & Halle Berry: James Bond returns in the 20th installment of the spy series. From Hong Kong to London, Bond circles the world in his quest to unmask a traitor, prevent a war, and capture an enemy who has disguised himself by physically altering his facial features. (129 min)

MALIBU'S MOST WANTED (PG-13) Jamie Kennedy & Anthony Anderson: Malibu's most unwanted rapper maintains a hip-hop lifestyle that is seriously hindering his father's bid for governor. When his dad's campaign manager tries to neutralize the problem and teach him a lesson, the rapper proves he is for real. (86min)

BULLETPROOF MONK (PG-13) Chow Yun-Fat & Seann William Scott: For many years, a monk with no name has zig-zagged the globe to protect an ancient scroll which holds the key to unlimited power. He mentors a young man whose only interest is himself. When the young man saves the monk from capture, the two become partners in a scheme to protect the scroll from a thief. (104min)

A MAN APART (R) Vin Diesel & Larenz Tate: Two men who grew up on the streets of L.A. and later join the DEA to fight the ever rising plague of drug traffic coming into the U.S. from Mexico, go to war when a major new player known as "Diablo" orders a hit on them that results in the death of one cop's wife. Now, consumed by revenge, nothing will stop them from getting their man. (109min)

IT RUNS IN THE FAMILY (PG-13) Michael Douglas & Kirk Douglas: Alex is a man caught in the middle trying to avoid the mistakes his father made while coming to terms with the ones he's already passed on to his own sons. Alex is navigating the tricky role of father, son and husband. It's a story about the loving, frustrating, reassuring, insane, and inescapable family bonds. (109 min)

ANTWONE FISHER (PG-13) Derek Luke & Denzel Washington: With the help of a psychiatrist, an angry Sailor on the verge of being kicked out of the Navy decides to embark on a search for the family that abandoned him as a baby. Along the way, he finds the courage to change his life dramatically. (113min)

REVERSAL (PG-13) Danny Moussetis & Kelly Vint: The son of a wrestling coach knows how to win his father's approval by keeping his weight down and winning matches. Ten years later, he's the wrestling champion but his striving for perfection will soon threaten his relationship with his girlfriend, his family and possibly his future. (109 min)

VIEW FROM THE TOP (PG-13) Gwyneth Paltrow & Christina Applegate: A young woman from meager beginnings with high hopes for her future, dreams of living the glamorous life of an international flight attendant and will do anything it takes to make that dream come true. The path to success is rarely smooth and she soon encounters more turbulence than even she expected. (87 min)

RENT CONTROL (R) Melissa Joan Hart & Ryan Browning: In overcrowded New York City it's almost impossible to find a cheap apartment. When two young actors move in with a relative, they think they've got it made, at least until she dies. Now the apartment will no longer be subject to rent control unless they can fool their nosy neighbors and the landlord. (90 min)